

Symptoms of Hantavirus

Symptoms usually appear 1 to 6 weeks after exposure to infected rodents or their droppings.

Symptoms include:

- Severe muscle aches
- Chills and fever, tiredness
- Headache or dizziness
- Nausea, vomiting, or stomach pain
- Difficulty breathing or coughing

People who experience any of these symptoms should contact their doctor immediately and be sure to mention that they have been exposed to rodents.



Treatment

The earlier someone infected with hantavirus gets medical care, the greater their chances of recovery. Even though there is no cure for hantavirus, medical care can help reduce the symptoms while the infected person is getting better.

Risky Activities

Activities where people work, play, or live near rodents can put them at higher risk. Some of these include:

- Living in places that have been empty or unused for a long time
- Working in barns or out-buildings



Sweeping kicks up virus particles into the air

- Dry sweeping or using air blowers to clean structures not often used
- Living in rodent infested areas
- Hiking or camping where rodents live
- Trapping or studying mice for research



Barns and out-buildings harbor rodents



For more information about hantavirus or other vector-borne diseases, contact San Diego County's Vector Control Program.

County of San Diego
Vector Control Program

County of San Diego
Vector Control Program
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HANTAVIRUS

Protect
Yourself from
Hantavirus



County of San Diego
VECTOR CONTROL PROGRAM



What Is Hantavirus?

Hantavirus is a rare but deadly disease that humans can catch from infected rodents. About 35% of the people infected with the virus die from it. Hantavirus can infect anyone, but knowing about the virus and ways to prevent infection will help protect you.

Hantavirus is an airborne virus. It is not spread from person-to-person. Infection occurs when airborne particles from rodent droppings are inhaled.



Look for the Mouse Droppings



Deer Mice

In the United States, deer mice are the main carriers of hantavirus. Mice are not affected by the virus. In San Diego County, deer mice are mostly found in rural areas, the desert, the mountains, and in areas close to canyons or open space where mice might live. The mice that commonly live with humans are house mice, not deer mice, and do not carry hantavirus. You should avoid contact with all wild rodents, because they may also carry other viruses and diseases as well.

Prevention

Humans are infected by breathing in virus particles. Take precautions to avoid virus particles when you are in rodent areas. Prevent hantavirus by following these steps:

- 1 **Do not** vacuum, sweep or dust rodent droppings
- 2 When cleaning out buildings that have been empty for a long period of time, air them out for at least 30 minutes by opening the doors and windows
- 3 Always wear latex or rubber gloves
- 4 Spray dead rodents or droppings with disinfectant before removing
- 5 Place dead rodents and any nesting material in a sealed plastic bag before throwing them away



Throw away rodents and anything they may have left behind in a sealed plastic bag

- 6 **Clean using wet cleaning methods:**
 - ✓ Make a disinfectant solution (9 parts water to 1 part bleach) or use a store-bought disinfectant (follow the label instructions)
 - ✓ Disinfect contaminated areas and let them sit for 15-20 minutes before cleaning

- ✓ Soak sponges with the solution and clean
- ✓ Wear face masks to prevent breathing in virus particles
- ✓ Place all cleaning materials in a sealed plastic bag and throw away immediately



Make your own disinfectant using bleach or use a store bought disinfectant

- 7 After cleaning, wash your gloved hands remove the gloves and dispose of them, then wash your bare hands as well



Wash your hands twice: first with gloves on and next with gloves off



Protect Your Home

One of the best ways of preventing exposure to hantavirus is to stop rodents from entering homes or cabins.

- Seal all holes that are large enough for mice to get in (dime-size or larger)
- Cover or pick up pet food dishes when they are not in use
- Store pet food in sealed containers
- Cover all trash cans with rodent proof lids



Be careful when placing traps

- Use mouse traps where there is evidence of mouse activity

- Remove woodpiles, old cars, trash and debris where rodents may live
- Store hay or firewood at least 100 feet away from buildings
- Cut grass, weeds and trim bushes within 100 feet of buildings

If you have paper or delicate materials that you think may have come in contact with hantavirus, you can place them in sunlight for several hours to quickly kill the virus particles or move them to a rodent free area for several days.